

THE MASONIC OBSERVER, AND GRAND LODGE CHRONICLE.

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THE Quarterly Communication of GRAND LODGE was presided over by the M. W. the GRAND MASTER, who was re-elected to that office. The M. W. the G. M. announced to G. L. that he had taken the position and requirements of the Prov. G. L. of Canada West into his serious consideration; that he regretted the neglect which had occurred, and that he was anxious to remedy their grievances.

He could not recognize an independent G. L.; but he would acquiesce in their recommendation of another to fill the office of P. G. M., unless he was prepared to justify his refusal to G. L.

He would also lessen the Canadian fees, and would subdivide the existing P. G. Lodges.

The report of the BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES in so far as concerned the circulation among country lodges of the Business Paper of G. L. was opposed by Br. ROXBURGH, with the connivance of Br. DOBIE, and was referred back to the Board for reconsideration, after a clear statement of the case from Br. BINCKES, and a clever speech from Br. BENSON, which caused considerable amusement.

The very able report of the COLONIAL BOARD was received, and their recommendations relative to Canada referred to the M. W. the G. M.

A MEMORIAL from the Prov. G. L. of Canada West was presented by the Rev. Br. PORTAL; who moved that it should be answered by the Colonial Board in conjunction with the M. W. the G. M., which was agreed to.

STRANGERS were prohibited from attending at the Festivals, on the motion of Br. WARREN. The M. W. the G. M. expressed his intention of prohibiting unauthorized reports of the debates in G. L. for the future.

There were not less than twenty motions still remaining for discussion when G. L. was closed.

THE statement of the M. W. the GRAND MASTER relative to CANADA will be read with peculiar satisfaction. The very handsome manner in which he expressed his regret for past neglect,—for which he is by no means solely responsible—cannot fail to conciliate those who have hitherto been dissatisfied with the conduct of the Executive, and we would fain hope will be accepted by our Canadian Brethren as a guarantee that they will have no cause to complain for the future.

They will henceforth have in their own hands the virtual appointment of their Provincial G. M.; their P. G. Lodges will be so divided as that every private lodge be within convenient and easy distance of its superior; their fees will be reduced within fair and equitable limits; and they will be supported by all the influence of the G. L. of ENGLAND against “the independent G. L. of CANADA.” The gratitude of the Craft is we think no less due to the Colonial Board for their comprehensive report upon this subject, as well as those who by their persevering efforts have at length succeeded in bringing the public opinion of the Order to bear upon the question.

We always believed that it was only necessary for the voice of the Craft to make itself heard above the unworthy advice of those incompetent counsellors who have hitherto confined the M. W. the G. M. within the inextricable meshes of red tape, in order to enable Lord ZETLAND to act in a manner worthy of his high name of office.

Nor is our expectation falsified by the result; better counsels have prevailed—thanks to better counsellors—and the consequence is that we have again reason to feel proud of having entrusted the highest honour we can bestow, upon an English nobleman who has proved himself so worthy of it.

The course adopted by the Rev. Bro. PORTAL with respect to the Canadian Memorial, and the approval that course obtained from every part of G. L., give us good ground for hoping that in the words of the former, “bye-gones will be bye-gones,” and that the “united” G. L. will henceforward continue to carry out whatever reforms may from time to time by necessary, in a spirit of fairness, of liberality, and of brotherly love.

WE are not of those who love censure for its own sake. Approval is the more pleasing function; criticism at the best is an invidious task. But, perhaps, in all human matters—the bitter and the sweet, the *agro dolce* of the Italian—are so inseparably blended, that satisfaction and regret are one and indivisible. As the rose has its thorn, and, according to the Greek poet, the bee her sting; so at the last G. L. the M. W., the G. M.’s statement, however conciliatory in tone and satisfactory in its nature, was barbed with one drawback, to which we listened with regret.

The G. M. hinted at some future prohibition of the publication of the proceedings in G. L. Now, independently of the impossibility of effectively carrying the resolve into execution—for there are two parties to this as to every other question, those forbidding and those forbidden—we entertain the strongest opinion of the impolicy of such a measure. It could not be *successful*; for there are many members of G. L. who, by the aid of notes and a good memory, would easily reproduce on the following morning the discussion of the previous night; and who could hinder the publication of such details? It would not be *wise* to remove from the press (we are arguing against ourselves) that check upon license and that guarantee for fairness which now exists in the publication of the proceedings. It would be *imprudent* to attempt to restrain the country lodges, whose sympathies are warmly enlisted in the constitutional administration of affairs, from a knowledge of the circumstances, which concern them not less than their brethren in London.

There are, indeed, certain members of the Dais to whom we have thought it our duty on former occasions to allude, who have not scrupled to avow opinions of more than Neapolitan despotism in constraining the craft to a virtual ignorance of every duty, except submission and humility. A pocket edition of the Book of Constitutions was thus objected to by one worthy brother on the ground of its tendency to familiarize G. L. with the law by which it is governed; but we should have thought that recent events might have inculcated a different lesson. Not to speak of innumerable Masonic journals in Canada and the U. S., the circulation of which has been found quite consistent with the interests of the Order, the *Freemasons' Magazine* in England was at one time edited by one of the present Grand Chaplains; and neither in the pages of that periodical nor in our own columns can be found an expression which trespasses on that ground which the Order has ever considered as sacred and mysterious. If indeed we cannot trust to the good feeling of all members of the craft, we are sure that an intimation from the M. W., the G. M., that it would be expedient to omit from the report any details, or discussion of a secret nature, would meet with a ready compliance; but to tell us, as we were recently informed by an anonymous "Past Master" of the Dais, that questions directly bearing upon the administration of our interests at home and abroad—questions with which all England might be acquainted without prejudice—are illegitimate topics of criticism, is a mockery of principle, of reason, and of truth.

Take the case of the authorised reports of debates in G. L., which are forwarded after each Quarterly communication to the Masters of private Lodges. Can anything be more meagre, more worthless for general information or for any practical purpose? No courtier-like oration of Br. Hall could have more shadow and less substance than these wasted skeletons of a debate. Or, can anything be more useless than a report, from which all that gives value to a report is eliminated,

which contains evidence neither of fact nor of argument, which no man will quote—upon which no man will rely?

That such is the case is evident from the conduct pursued by the Legislature. To this day the reports of the debates in the Houses of the Lords and the Commons are legally forbidden, practically sanctioned. And with good reason: for whilst the advantage of full publicity is recognised, the right of occasional privacy is maintained as a check upon abuse, and as a privilege, which, however rarely it be exercised, may be necessary for the independence of the legislature, and the general interests of the country. Accompanied by these safeguards the publicity of all administrative details cannot be too highly prized. By a wise executive it will ever be courted as the mirror of their own conduct, and as the antidote to popular suspicion. Let then our friends on the Dais acquiesce in that which is as much for their interests as it is for those of the Craft, and which can be no more stayed or hindered in its course than the sun can be made to stand still in the heavens.

OUR Provincial Brethren will see with some indignation that the motion carried by Lord CARNARVON, in November last, for sending the business paper of G. L. into the country—and in favour of which so many petitions have been presented—is virtually shelved for the present. The process by which this was effected is not very creditable to the parties principally concerned; but, as it is not uninstructive, we will enter at some length into the matter.

It must be premised, that Lord CARNARVON when he first proposed that the country lodges should be informed of what was coming on in G. L. contented himself with the affirmation of the principle, well knowing that the great talent exhibited by so many legal Brethren in that *chef-d'œuvre* of anatomy, commonly called hair-splitting, would not fail to be brought into play the moment he attempted to deal with details, and that technical objections, like a plague of locusts, would forthwith overwhelm the scheme—whatever it might be. Accordingly, it was left to the Board of General Purposes to settle the day on which it was necessary that the Board of Masters should in future meet, to allow of the business paper being submitted to the country lodges in sufficient time for enabling them to take part in the discussion.

They recommended that the Board should meet on the same night as the Board of Benevolence, five weeks before G. L., which would give ample time for the business paper to be printed and circulated. When this recommendation came to be moved for adoption, the GRAND REGISTRAR, whose duty it was, as Chairman of the Board of General Purposes, to propose the necessary alterations in the Book of Constitutions, declined to do so; and Br. ROXBURGH having taken his brief, proceeded to argue against the proposal on the ground that since no recommendation of the Board of Benevolence can come before G. L. until it has been to the Board of Masters, whatever might be recommended by

the former at its meeting, one week before G. L. could not be brought forward for three months.

It happens however, unfortunately for our two legal Brethren, that the Board of Benevolence is an independent Body, appointed with specific powers for a specific purpose, and that their recommendations to G. L. never go before the Board of Masters at all; in fact, the Board of Benevolence is never opened till after the Board of Masters has been declared to be closed; the only proposed money grants that need be notified to the latter being those for buying property, and for other independent purposes.

All this was clearly stated by Br. BINCKES; but we think G. L. has a right to complain that the many Brethren of experience on the Dais, who, as Chairmen of the Board of Benevolence, must have been perfectly acquainted with the law, permitted a false impression to prevail, and by their silence acquiesced in the more than questionable manœuvre of the GRAND REGISTRAR and his learned accomplice.

Provincial Masons are, and must always be, at a disadvantage compared with their Brethren in London. Nothing can ever make up for having to cross half England, instead of to cross the street, in order to attend G. L. The least that can be done is to carry out the spirit and letter of the Constitutions by informing country Brethren of what is coming on in sufficient time for them to discuss the various questions, and make arrangements for the presence of their Delegates in London.

We believe that one week is the very shortest time in which it would be possible, without interfering with the regular work of the office, for the GRAND SECRETARY to print and issue the paper of business; and a fortnight is the least that ought to be allowed for summoning lodges of emergency to consider the paper when it arrives.

We recommend our country Brethren to attend G. L. in June, when the matter will be again brought forward, so as to secure justice for themselves; and meanwhile, if they want a subject for consideration, they may estimate the amount of confidence to be reposed in those who use their legal ability not to elucidate, but to mislead and mystify. A reference to the debate will show that the GRAND REGISTRAR would have also succeeded in preventing an increased grant being given to a distressed Brother, if his law and precedents had not been proved by Br. HAVERS to be equally worthless.

WE fully appreciate the feelings of those Brethren who are anxious that the resignation of the GRAND SECRETARY should be accepted; at the same time we are not quite certain that the object they have in view will be best attained by the means they propose to adopt.

Their object of course is to secure efficiency in the GRAND SECRETARY's department, while at the same time they evince their personal respect for that officer by proposing that he should retain the full amount of his salary as a retiring pension. Now there can be no question

but that the experience of a Brother who has been acquainted with all the details of official life for more than fifty years, cannot easily be replaced, and if that experience can still be made available, and the efficiency of the department at the same time be secured, everything will have been gained and nothing lost.

We cannot but think therefore that it will better to embody the opinion of G. L. in a resolution to that effect, leaving it to the M. W. the G. M. to make such arrangements, by the appointment of a joint GRAND SECRETARY or of additional Clerks, as will secure an efficient staff. While at the same time the feelings of our venerable Brother will have been considered, and the interests of the Craft be promoted.

THREE was once an Eastern potentate, who was much tormented with flies during his post-prandial hours of repose. He stationed a slave by his side with strict orders to slay the obtrusive insects should they presume to hover around his sacred person. One, however, more daring than the rest, actually settled on his majesty's nose; the slave paused for an instant, and then true to his instructions, aimed a well directed blow at the miscreant. Alas! the fly was on the alert—he beat a hasty retreat—and the enraged monarch, who received on his most prominent feature, the punishment intended for his assailant, was no sooner sufficiently recovered from the shock, than he ordered the unhappy slave to instant execution.

We commend this tale to the advisers of the M. W. the G. M., and for fear they should miss the mark, like our friend, we will take the liberty of explaining it to them. The fortunate fly, and the unfortunate slave, represent our own unworthy selves and them. The Nabob's nose is their dignity and credit; and we warn them in all good will, that if they assail us, they will most unquestionably succeed in nothing else but striking a heavy blow at their own reputation.

They are anxious, it appears, to prevent any report of the debates in G. L. being circulated through the craft, excepting those official skeletons which periodically start up from the Grand Secretary's office. But surely if it is desirable that any reports should be published at all, it is no less so that they should be full and accurate, in order that the constituents of G. L. may see whether or no their representatives have carried out their instructions, or what have been the arguments which have influenced their decision. We shall doubtless be told that unauthorized publications offer no guarantee for the suppression of matter which it may be inexpedient to make known. To this we reply, that we are quite certain that a request from the M. W. the G. M. on the subject, will meet with instant compliance; and till such a request has been made, and ignored, no case has been made out for permitting the executive to have a monopoly of publication. We apprehend, however, that the advisers of the M. W. the G. M. are as fully aware, as we are, that all this is beside the real point at issue. The "fly" is not the report, but our criticisms.

And why do they dread these? Because they are false, or because they are true? We are told that those who dread the light are not usually persons whose conduct is unexceptionable, and the lovers of darkness may depend upon it that their management of our affairs has not lately been of such a kind as to induce the Craft at large to forego that publicity which has now existed for nearly a quarter of a century, in spite of frequent attempts on the part of the authorities—and always when they had reason to be ashamed of themselves—to prevent free discussion.

It is owing to publicity alone that late abuses are in process of being reformed, and we recommend the executive rather to court, than to attempt to suppress, that full discussion of their conduct which none desire to escape but those whose proceedings will not bear investigation. Supposing they could succeed in suppressing the reports of G. L., which we assure them once for all they will not do, what will be the result? Why that in order to fill up our space, we should double the number of our leading articles, and multiply our lampoons by three. So that in any event their "fly" will escape them, and the blow will recoil upon themselves.

We trust, however, that the M. W. the G. M. will consult his own good sense in this matter, and not follow the advice of those who have already involved him in considerable difficulties, of which he has to bear the brunt, while they from their insignificance escape.

A contest with the press is hopeless. It has been given up by parliament, and has failed whenever it has been attempted by the authorities of G. L. What has occurred of late will not make such a contest more hopeful now than it was ten years ago. Let the M. W. the G. M. trust to the good feelings of the Masonic press, and not count those his enemies who have every desire to be his friends.

GRAND LODGE.

The Quarterly communication of Grand Lodge was held on Wednesday, the 4th inst., at Freemasons Hall.

Present—The Right Hon. the Earl of Zetland, M. W. G. M. on the Throne; R. W. Admiral Sir L. Curtis, P. G. M., Hants, as D. G. M.; R. W. B. B. Cabbell, M. P., P. G. M., Norfolk, as S. G. W.; R. W. Thos. Tooke, J. G. W., R. W. R. J. Bagshaw, P. G. M., Essex; R. W. Alex. Dobie, P. G. M., Surrey and G. Reg.; R. W. Col. W. Burlton, Past P. G. M., Bengal; R. W. the Right Hon. Lord Panmure, P. S. G. W.; R. W. W. F. Beudon, P. J. G. W.; V. W. Rev. John E. Cox, and V. W. Rev. Edward Moore, G. Chaplain; V. W. S. Tonkins, Grand Treasurer; V. W. W. H. White, G. Sec.; W.—Jones, G. S. D.; W. F. R. White, as G. J. D.; W. John Hervey, P. G. S. D.; S. W. Danker, G. Sup. Works; W. John Havers, P. G. J. D.; W. J. N. Tomkins, P. G. J. D.; W. G. W. K. Potter, P. G. J. D.; W. R. W. Jennings, G. Dir. Cer.; W. Henry Chapman, Asst. G. Dir. Cer.; W. C. W. Elkington, P. G. S. B., as G. S. B.; W. R. J. Spiers, P. G. S. B.; W. John L. Evans, P. G. S. B.; W. A. Le Vean, P. G. S. B.; W. John Masson, P. G. S. B.; W. George Biggs, P. G. S. B.; W. William Barnfield, Asst. G. Sec.; W. Edwin Ransford, G. Organist; W. Joseph Smith, G. Pursuivant, &c., &c.; the Grand Stewards of the year; the Master, Past Masters, and Wardens of the Grand Steward's Lodge; the Masters, Past Masters, and Wardens of many other Lodges.

The regulations for the government of G. L. were read by the Grand Secretary. The minutes of the Quarterly communication of the 3rd December, and of the Special Grand Lodge of the 11th February were confirmed.

ELECTION OF M. W. GRAND MASTER.

W. Bro. BRADFORD said, in proposing the re-election of the EARL of ZETLAND, the present most worshipful Grand Master, he would

not expatiate at any length on the excellence displayed by that distinguished Brother, in the office he had so worthily filled, because he was present. Under the noble Brother's presidency the interests of Masonry had advanced greatly, and he felt that it was quite unnecessary to say one word more, feeling assured that the Grand Lodge would unanimously agree to his proposition.

W. Bro. ——— seconded the motion.

W. Bro. ELKINGTON said, he had received a letter from W. Bro. LORD SOUTHAMPTON, expressing his regret that his name should have been proposed in opposition to that of the W. Bro. the EARL of ZETLAND. This circumstance had been the cause of great annoyance to him, and he much regretted that his name had been used without his authority.

W. Bro. WARREN, as the proposer of LORD SOUTHAMPTON, now rose for the purpose of withdrawing that worshipful Brother's name. In doing so, he thought he was entitled to refer to a letter he had received from W. Bro. LORD SOUTHAMPTON, which breathed a somewhat different tone to that just referred to. The letter certainly expressed regret that he (LORD SOUTHAMPTON) should have been put in nomination, and requested that no further steps should be taken in the matter. The fact was, that, LORD SOUTHAMPTON had only been proposed as a protest against the principle of perpetual re-election of the same worshipful Brother. (Hear.) He did not intend the slightest disrespect to the present W. Grand Master, the EARL of ZETLAND, in putting forward another name; but the principle he held was this, that the same Brother ought not to be perpetually elected, but that new blood should be infused into the office.

R. W. W. Bro. LORD PANMURE considered that great discredit would be brought on Grand Lodge if they allowed a worshipful Brother to name any Brother as a candidate for the office of Grand Master, without having first received the sanction of that Brother. He quite admitted that it was in their power to have fresh blood infused if necessary, every year. In that respect, the Grand Lodge here had an advantage over the Grand Lodge of Scotland; for there, the same Brother was constantly re-elected as Grand Master, and was in fact, looked upon as a kind of fixture. In England, the right of re-election was reserved by Grand Lodge. But when a Grand Master has distinguished himself by the satisfactory performance of his duties towards the Craft, he was quite sure it was for the general advantage that Grand Lodge should continue to have the benefit of his experience. Whenever a change was proposed, let them be first assured that the permission of the Brother, whose name was used, had been obtained, while Grand Lodge reserved the right to every Brother of proposing a name. He thought that they should also insist on the right of asking every Brother, who proposed a new name, whether if the new Brother were elected, he had signified his consent to fill the chair?

R. W. Bro. the DEPUTY GRAND MASTER, Sir L. CURTIS, said it now became his pleasing duty to state to Grand Lodge that the present M. W. Grand Master, the Earl of ZETLAND, having been proposed for re-election, he should formally put the question.

The Grand Lodge, with one dissentient, re-elected the M. W. Bro., the Earl of ZETLAND.

The M. W. GRAND MASTER sincerely assured Grand Lodge that he found it very difficult to express the feelings which inspired him on this occasion, or to thank them, as he desired, for the highly flattering manner in which he had been re-elected to the high and honourable office he had filled during the past year. He did not disguise from himself the many disqualifications he possessed. He felt that some years ago he was able to display more activity in the performance of his duties than he could now, and he also felt that he had a much more difficult task to perform in G. L. than formerly was the case. But he had been so often re-elected in a similarly flattering manner, that while he continued to be so seconded by Grand Lodge, he would say, however difficult he found the post, he would endeavour, to the best of his ability, to discharge its duties. He would continue to serve the office so long as it was considered conducive towards advancing the interests of Masonry, and satisfactory to the general welfare of the Craft. (Cheers.) In looking back upon the past year, he could say that not only was Masonry prospering in England, it was flourishing also in India and Australia. In those Colonies, he was happy to say, there were no complaints. But there was one part of our colonial possessions on which he could not look with the same degree of satisfaction, and that was Canada. (Hear, hear.) That was a subject which had his long and attentive consideration. He thought he should consult the convenience of Grand Lodge, and he hoped, at the same time, to remove the asperity which existed, by stating the result of his long and anxious deliberations. He regretted as much as any one that the Canadian Brethren did not complain without some degree

of truth—(Hear, hear);—and that they had not received all that consideration which they had reason to expect. He would not, however, reopen the subject on its merits. The chief object which he now had was to amend the past shortcomings, and to endeavour to keep matters more smoothly moving for the future. He was bound to say, however, that he had found that he was not fully acquainted with the whole of the circumstances of the state of affairs relating to Canada West when he had previously addressed Grand Lodge upon the subject. (Hear, hear.) There had been some little confusion in his mind with respect to the P. G. Lodge of Canada West, and the so-called Independent Grand Lodge. (Hear, hear.) With the latter he need hardly say that they could have nothing whatever to do. (Hear, hear; and loud applause.) They had thrown off their allegiance to the G. L. of England, and that without even returning the warrants which they held under its jurisdiction. (Hear.) It was under these circumstances that the term “rebels” had been applied to them—(Hear;)—and he thought that Grand Lodge would agree that that term was not unjustly so applied. (Hear, hear.) On a careful consideration of the whole case, he had arrived at the conclusion that he might, without any sacrifice of the privileges with which he was invested as G. M., make such concessions to the Canadian Brethren as would fully meet their wants, and he hoped would satisfy them. The Canadian Brethren wished to have the power of electing their own G. M.; and, secondly, they wished to retain all their fees of every sort and kind;—that their P. G. M. should grant warrants for new Lodges, and appoint subordinate P. G. Masters: but that the G. L. of England should still retain a supervising power. This, it would be at once perceived, was tantamount to a declaration of Independence. (Hear, hear.) This scheme, demanded as a whole, could only be met by a direct negative, unless he sacrificed those privileges which belonged to his high office, and which he was desirous of handing in their integrity to his successors. As far as the appointment of officers was concerned, it was an irksome, thankless task. (Hear, hear.) The Canadian Masons contended that they had ample means of ascertaining who was a fit and proper person to preside over them; but that he, at that distance, had not the same favourable opportunity. (Hear.) He felt the force of that remark; and, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case, he was prepared to say that he would appoint as Prov. G. Master of Canada West any Brother recommended to him by the Brethren as most acceptable to themselves. They might do this, if they preferred it, through the medium of a resolution of the P. G. Lodge, or in such other form as might be agreed on. (Hear, and cheers.) Such a nomination would of course be subject to his approval; but he should not withhold his approval from any Brother so nominated without good and sufficient reasons, and without being prepared to justify such a step in G. L. (Hear, hear.) In these concessions he only announced his personal intentions. He did not mean to consent to any alterations in their contributions to effect these objects, or in any way to curtail the prerogatives of his office, or to bind his successor to continue the course which he might commence. (Hear, hear.) The merely pecuniary considerations were of secondary importance, and would never, he hoped, influence them in coming to a decision. (Cheers.) At present the registration fee was 10s.; of which half went to the P. G. Lodge. Certificates, 6s. 6d. Total fees, 11s. 6d. He should propose to make the registration fee 7s. 6d., which would include the certificate; and thus there would be a diminution of fees to the extent of 4s. The whole scale of fees would then be—Registration and Certificate in London, £1 7s. 6d.; in the country, 17s.; in Canada, 7s. 6d. (Hear, hear; and applause.) The fees to the Benevolent Fund, London, £4; Country, £2; Canada, nil. (Renewed applause.) He had already provided for the issue of blank certificates in such numbers as would prevent delays and complaints on that score. As regarded the issue of warrants, such a power, or one equivalent to it, had always been exercised by the P. G. Masters of Colonial Grand Lodges. They had hitherto granted dispensations for holding new lodges, till warrants could be procured, and those warrants had never been referred to. This, however, was a matter which could now be left to the Colonial Board. Owing to representations which had reached him, he was inclined to subdivide the provinces in such a manner that no lodge should be at too great a distance from its P. G. Lodge. (Hear.) This he should do after consulting with the brethren upon the spot. (Cheers.) The appointment of P. G. Masters, however, must remain the prerogative of the G. M., just as the appointment of the officers of a private lodge was the prerogative of the W. M. He should, however, consult the wishes of the brethren in making these appointments. (Hear, hear.) Such was the course he purposed to pursue; and he could appeal to at least one member of Grand Lodge that he had determined upon this course, and stated

his determination so far back as the 3rd of January; and he believed that in so doing he should meet the wishes of the Canadian brethren, without sacrificing the prerogatives of his office, which he wished, from no selfish motive, to preserve. He hoped that they had now brought the matter to an amicable termination; and he thought that the statement he had then made would save G. L. any further protracted discussions on the subject. (Hear, hear.) The appointment of P. G. M. would be settled by him to the satisfaction of the P. G. Lodge of Canada; and all the details could be carried out by the Colonial Board. (Applause.) He trusted that he had now done justice. He repeated his regret that the matter had not been settled before; and he knew that he might rely with full confidence upon G. L. for that support which they had never yet withheld from him in his endeavours to discharge his duty to the best of his ability.

(The noble lord, at the conclusion of his statement, which appeared to give the highest satisfaction to all present, sat down amidst great applause.)

The re-election of the GRAND TREASURER was next proposed by Bro. GEO. BARRETT, and being seconded by Bro.—was unanimously agreed to.

The election of a member of the Board of General purposes, in the room of Bro. F. Burges, deceased, was proceeded with, and Bro. E. REBERTS, W. M., of Lodge, No. 914, New Swindon, was elected.

The Report of the Board of Benevolence, for the last quarter, was presented, and the following grants recommended:

The widow of Gustavus W. Blanch, No. 195, London, £50; Bro. Thomas John Coggin, No. 108, London, £30; Bro. Brace Chilcot, No. 671, Monmouth, £30; Bro. Thomas Scott, No. 11, London, £100; on the proposition for voting a grant of £50 to Bro. Joseph A. Joseph, No. 4, London.

W. Bro. MASSON reviewed the history of “The Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge,” alluding to its past career in terms of high eulogy, and stated this was the first member of it who had ever had occasion to apply for their benevolent assistance. Who had exerted himself more zealously than Bro. Joseph in promoting in every way the interests of Masonry, particularly by his liberal support of all their charities? Bearing this in mind, and also the circumstances with respect to the Lodge to which he had alluded, and regarding this as in every way a very strong case, he should move as an amendment, “That the sum be £100.”

W. Bro. HAVERS cordially responding to all that had been said of Bro. Joseph, had great pleasure in seconding the amendment.

V. W. Bro. DOUKE, agreeing with the propriety of the amendment, questioned the power of G. L. to entertain it. Notice to that effect ought to have been given to the Board of Masters. (No. no.) He could personally speak to the past zeal of Bro. Joseph. It was through his instrumentality that the heavy debt due to the Tavern from the Somerset House Lodge was discharged, and it was Bro. Joseph, who revived the Lodge, and brought it again into activity. Still he was of opinion that notice of the amendment should have been given.

W. Bro. HAVERS would pledge himself to produce ample precedent for amendment.

R. W. Bro. BEADON supported the amendment, as did W. Bro. ROXBURCH.

The amendment for the increased grant was carried.

THE KING OF HANOVER.

The M. W. the G. M. intimated that he held in his hand a copy of the

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GRAND LODGE OF HANOVER.

They had been framed by the King of Hanover, and he moved that they be received and entered in the minutes.

W. Bro. ARIA begged to ask, as the Grand Lodge knew nothing of the contents of these instructions, whether there was any allusion in them to, or any alteration of, the statutes regulating the admission of Masons?

The M. W. GRAND MASTER. None whatever.

W. Bro. ARIA. I wish to ask the question in a more definite form. Is there any thing in the instructions which has reference to the exclusion of news?

The M. W. GRAND MASTER. There is not.

REPORT OF BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES.

R. W. Bro. DOUKE, President, presented the following report to the United Grand Lodge, of free and accepted Masons, of England.

“The Board of General Purposes beg in accordance with the resolution of the Special Grand Lodge, on the 19th November, to recommend that the following alteration be made in the law relating to

the General Committee, at p. 20, of the Book of Constitutions, after the words 'shall meet,' instead of 'on the Wednesday, immediately preceding each Quarterly communication,' insert 'on the last Wednesday in January, July, and October, and in April, on the Thursday, next, after the last Wednesday.' And also to order: 'That in future Reports, Communications, or Documents, affirmed or rejected at one meeting of Grand Lodge, be not read *in Extenso* with the minutes at the next Grand Lodge, excepting when called for by any Brother with a view of founding some motion thereon.'

The Board beg to report, that a complaint was preferred by the Lodge of Benevolence against the W. Master of the Eastern Star Lodge, No. 112, which had recommended the Petition of Brother Charles Hamond, late a member thereof, for relief, which Brother attended at the meetings of the Lodge of Benevolence in December and January, but in consequence of the non-attendance of the W. Master, or any other member of the Lodge as required by the laws, the case of the petitioner could not be taken into consideration.

"The W. Master attended the Board pursuant to summons, together with his Senior Warden, and stated that he was not Master at the time, but that the last Master, Brother E. U. Gardner, who had signed the recommendation, did attend on the first occasion, but in consequence of the serious illness of his brother, he was compelled to quit before the petition of Brother Hamond was called on. Upon the second occasion some very urgent business prevented his leaving home. The present Master promised that due attention should be paid to the case at the next meeting of the Lodge of Benevolence. Under these circumstances the Board has deferred passing any vote on the subject until they shall be informed of the result of the next meeting of the Lodge of Benevolence.

"(Signed) "A. DOBIE,
"24th February 1857." "President."

W. Bro. DOBIE made some remarks in connection with recommendation of the report. With regard to the portion having reference to the reading of documents *in Extenso*, which had been discussed at the previous meeting, he entirely concurred with that recommendation, which he begged to state was adopted from the suggestion of Brother Warren, thrown out in his motion in December last. He begged to move that such an alteration take place in the General Laws as would carry out the purpose of the recommendation.

W. Bro. WARREN rose with pleasure to second the motion. He did not expect such a compliment would have been paid him as that a resolution of that kind would have been proposed from the Dais. He was glad however to find that the Board of General Purposes was willing to admit that for once he was right.

W. Bro. the Rev. G. R. PORTAL begged to ask if the R. W. Bro. DOBIE intended to move the first paragraph of the report.

R. W. Bro. DOBIE said, he did not, at the same time intimating that his reason for the omission, was, because he did not entirely concur in the recommendation.

W. Bro. the Rev. G. R. PORTAL said, then he would make the motion.

W. Bro. PORTAL thought it was advisable to carry out the previous resolution of G. L., which had for its object to let the members of Country Lodges know what was to come forward for discussion in G. L.

Bro. the Hon. A. HERBERT said he fully concurred in the necessity of this course, and begged to second the motion.

W. Bro. ROXBURGH proposed, that the first part of the report relating to the alteration of time of meeting of the General Committee, be referred back to the Board, with the recommendation, that they consider what effect the proposed alterations would have on the Book of Constitutions generally, and on the present laws with regard to days of meeting. He very much disliked this "tinkering" system of amendment, which involved alteration of certain rules and regulations, totally regardless of the way in which others were thereby affected. A reference to the Book of Constitutions would at once show, in the instance now before them, how inconsistent other portions would be, provided the alteration now proposed be adopted. His specific objections to the alteration were, that it would deprive them of five weeks of the time, now at their disposal for giving notices of motion, which he considered unjust and unfair to the London brethren; and that it would interfere to such an extent with the Board of Benevolence, that the cases of those applicants for relief at the meeting after that of the General Committee could not be entertained, till the next Quarterly Communication after the succeeding one, as they could not be submitted to the Board of Masters as was now the case, thus postponing the relief for another three months. He thought he had adduced reasons amply sufficient why this report should be referred back to the Board of General Purposes, and he begged to move to that effect.

Bro. ARIA wished to know, in case the resolution passed, whether any provisions were made for transmitting the requisite information to County Lodges. Was there any provision—such as a printed notice—to transmit the information?

R. W. Bro. DOBIE. Certainly not.

W. Bro. ARIA did not see how the County Lodges would arrive at the purposed benefit unless some steps were taken to furnish them with the information.

W. Bro. BINCKES could not pretend to the possession of that legal acumen which so eminently characterised Brother Roxburgh, but giving the motion of Brother Portal the best consideration in his power, he was unable to see those objections to it which had been so speciously urged. What was the main object it proposed? To give to country brethren greater opportunities than they at present possessed, for making themselves acquainted with the matters to be discussed in G. L., and for coming to a decision thereon, so that they may instruct those brethren, properly deputed in open Lodge, as to the course to be pursued with reference thereto. And what were Brother Roxburgh's objections to the proposed alteration? First, that it would curtail the time now at command, for giving the requisite notices of motion, practically reducing the twelve weeks to eight. He admitted this, and felt it to be somewhat of an objection. But was not this disadvantage more than counterbalanced by the decided advantage afforded to the country members? He hoped the country members would have all due facilities afforded them, and that they would in future command greater weight in G. L. than they had hitherto done. If this was effected, it would, in his opinion, far outweigh any little inconvenience, such as that complained of. The second objection was of a more serious character, and he confessed would have great influence with him, (even after what he had just stated,) if it had any foundation. Brother Roxburgh tells us that if we adopt this alteration, the recommendations from the Board of Masters, at the last sitting of the Quarter, cannot be attended to, because it is impossible they can have been submitted to the Board of Masters, whose day of meeting would be a month earlier; and that, therefore, you would postpone for another three months, the relief which our distressed brethren might stand in imminent need of. The fact is, however, that the Board of Benevolence has nothing whatever to do with the Board of Masters. It has an existence, and a jurisdiction, concurrent with, but not in any way dependent on, the Board of Masters. The constitutions grant it certain powers which it exercises of its own independent authority, and its proceedings need not, and never do, come under the cognizance of the Board of Masters as such. There, once in every quarter, the two Boards meet on the same evening, in the same room, but they are two distinct bodies for all practical purposes; and the Board of Masters is closed before the Board of Benevolence is opened. He, therefore, contended that the only objection left to answer amounted to but a slight inconvenience; and setting against this the manifest advantages which the proposed alteration would afford to the country members, he trusted it would be adopted by G. L.

A W. Bro., whose name we could not ascertain, supported the motion for giving information to the country lodges.

W. Bro. SAVAGE must oppose both the recommendation of the Board, and the motion of Bro. Roxburgh. He thought much inconvenience would result from the adoption of the proposed alteration; and as he could not see the utility of referring the matter back to the Board, he should meet the recommendation with a direct negative. He would not sit down, however, without corroborating the view taken by Bro. Binckes as regards the Board of Benevolence. The proceedings of that Board always had been entirely independent of the Board of Masters, and never were submitted to it. The objections on that point, therefore, could have no weight; but there were others equally important to his mind, which induced him to adopt the course he had just announced.

Bro. BENSON supported the motion, and said the whole matter lay in a nut-shell, though Bro. Roxburgh had contrived to confuse it. Whatever inconveniences might be involved in altering the day of meeting of the General Committee, they were as nothing compared with the advantage gained by informing country lodges of the questions to be discussed in G. L., so as to enable them to take part in their discussion. The Constitutions expressly stated that such ought to be the case, and that brethren ought not to be "taken by surprise," as they were at present. Bro. Roxburgh talked of "tinkering the laws," but there was no tinkering equal to that of the Grand Registrar, who acknowledged that he stole his tin from Bro. Warren. (Hear, hear; and laughter.)

The amendment was then put, and declared to be carried.

REPORT OF COLONIAL BOARD.

R. W. Bro. Col. BURLTON, P.P.G.M. for Bengal, then moved that the following report should be received and entered on the minutes.

"To the United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of England.

"The Colonial Board beg to present the following Report upon the M. W. Grand Master's communication relative to Colonial Lodges and Brethren:

"1st. The M. W. Grand Master states, that 'representations have been made to him by Memorials and otherwise from Lodges and Brethren in some of the Colonies, as to the great inconvenience experienced by them, owing to the inevitable delay in obtaining Grand Lodge certificates, which occupies in some cases twelve months; and further, some thinking that the interests of the Craft in such Colonies would be greatly promoted, if power were given to them to nominate at stated periods their own Provincial Grand Masters, subject to the approval of the M. W. Grand Master.'

"2. The M. W. Grand Master further states, 'that he has taken these several matters into his consideration, and after the most mature deliberation, is of opinion that some remedies ought to be applied to meet the alleged inconveniences.'

"3rd. The M. W. Grand Master is of opinion that the same measure of relief should apply to all District Grand Lodges without distinction.

"4th. The M. W. Grand Master proposes that the registration fee for every newly-initiated Brother be 7s. 6d., which will entitle the Brother to a Grand Lodge Certificate; the registration fee for joining Brethren to remain at 2s. 6d. That each Lodge shall make a return to Grand Lodge annually, together with the amount of dues payable, unless there be a District Grand Master, in which case the payment may be made to him or to his Deputy, to be by him transmitted to London. That the district Grand Master shall be supplied with blank forms of certificates for distribution.

"5th. With a view to remedying the grievance relative to the appointing of the District Grand Masters, the M. W. Grand Master proposes that every third year an account should be furnished him by every district Grand Lodge of their proceedings and transactions, on receipt of which he will determine whether the interests of the Craft would be best promoted by the continuance in office of the District Grand Master, and the decision of the M. W. Grand Master will be communicated to the District Grand Lodge.

"6th. The Board is of opinion that the remedies proposed by the M. W. Grand Master, as regards the payment of fees and issuing of certificates, are satisfactory, but they would recommend the attachment to the latter of the Seal of the District Grand Lodge, as well as the counter-signatures of the District Grand Lodge Authorities.

"7th. The Board regrets that it cannot express its approval of the proposal relative to District Grand Masters, as affording a remedy for the grievance complained of, since it only involves the exercise of a power which has already been vested by the Constitutions in the M. W. Grand Master, and which the Grand Lodge is bound to suppose has hitherto been exercised with all the vigilance which is demanded by his high responsibility.

"8th. With regard to the Brethren in Canada West, the Board find that there is a special grievance complained of, viz.: that while they have no voice in the election of the M. W. Grand Master of England, they have no control over the conduct of their own District Grand Master, and that while they are themselves best qualified to select fit persons for that important post, Brethren have been appointed by an authority altogether external to them, who have not possessed their confidence, and who have neglected their interests, and that Masonry has, in consequence, suffered much damage.

"9th. The Board does not consider that these grievances would be remedied by the transmission to England, once in three years, of the minutes of the District Grand Lodge.

"10th. In accordance, therefore, with the precedent afforded by the Grand Lodge of England, the Board unanimously recommends that a Meeting of the District Grand Lodge of Canada West should be held annually, on the first Wednesday in December, at which nominations should be made by ballot of Brethren to fill the office of District Grand Master. That of these names, not more than three (having the largest number of votes), should be forthwith transmitted to the M. W. Grand Master, with the number of votes given to each. That he shall, within a month after the receipt of such List, appoint one of them to the office of District Grand Master, and the installation shall take place on the first Wednesday in March. If no appointment shall have been received by the Provincial Grand Secretary at that time, the Brother having the greatest number of votes shall be so installed, and shall be considered to all intents and purposes, to have been appointed by the M. W. Grand Master.

"11th. The Board further recommends that with a view to the better representation of the Provincial G. L. of Canada West, in

the Grand Lodge of England, the said Provincial Grand Lodge be permitted to appoint a representative in the Grand Lodge of England, subject to the same conditions, and having the same rank as the representative of a Foreign Grand Lodge.

"The Board cannot conclude this report on the communication of the M. W. Grand Master without expressing its deep sense of the careful consideration given by him to the subjects treated of, while, at the same time, they feel bound to express a unanimous opinion that nothing but the prompt concession of the points they have recommended will be accepted by the Canadian Lodges, or avail to remedy the unhappy discontent at present existing.

"Referring to an application received from Canada West, and under present circumstances, the Board unanimously recommends the Grand Lodge not to recognize the Grand Lodge of Canada West.

"(Signed) WILLIAM BURTON,
P.P.G.M., Bengal. P.M. 97, 125, 552 & 596,
"Chairman.

"Free Masons' Hall, 6th February, 1857."

W. Bro. the Rev. G. R. PORTAL said it would perhaps be better if G. L. were to adopt the first six paragraphs, and refer the rest to the M. W. the G. M.

R. W. Bro. BURTON expressed his concurrence in this suggestion, which was unanimously agreed to.

PETITION FROM THE PROV. G. L. OF CANADA WEST.

W. Bro. the Rev. G. R. PORTAL said, he had a petition to present from the Prov. G. L. of Canada West. He would not enter into the details, but state generally—that it contained a statement of their grievances, and detailed the steps that had been taken from time to time, since 1853, for obtaining redress. After the very Masonic and handsome expression of regret, which had fallen from the G. M. relative to past neglect, he was sure that all would concur with him in a desire, that byegones should be byegones. (Loud cheers.) He trusted the Prov. G. L. of Canada would agree with him; (hear, hear) and as the Prov. G. Secretary had stated to him, that they were anxious for a reply to their memorial by May, when there would be a Prov. G. L.—he begged to move, that the memorial be referred to the Colonial Board to reply to, in conjunction with the M. W. the G. M. (Cheers)

R. W. Bro. Lord PANMURE had a deeper interest than any Brother present in seeing peace restored to the Canadian Lodges, and co-operation again established with Grand Lodge here. The reason why he felt this deeper interest was, because it was in Canada that he had been first admitted into the Craft, and it was on that account he felt the greatest pain at viewing the differences that had prevailed. He trusted however, reunion would be established. And he had listened with much pleasure to the observations of his friend Bro. Portal, which came from him with peculiar propriety, as a minister of peace. (Cheers.) He was quite sure, they might now safely rely on the word of honor of the G. M., that no efforts would be spared to promote peace and harmony between the G. L. of England and the Prov. G. L. of Canada. (Hear, hear.)

The M. W. the GRAND MASTER said:—The present position was an exceptional case. It was quite unprecedented its being referred to the Colonial Board, and he hoped that such a course would not be deemed a precedent.

W. Bro. ROXBURGH thought it would be advisable, to prevent misapprehension in future, to introduce words in the resolution for referring the petition, which would show that this reference was made on account of the emergency of the case.

The suggestion was acceded to.

EXCLUSION OF STRANGERS AT FESTIVALS.

W. Bro. WARREN rose to move his resolution, that in future no person, not being a member of the Craft, be allowed to dine at any of the Masonic festivals. He had given notice of his intention, to the Grand Secretary, to bring forward his motion, in order not to take the M. W. Grand Master by surprise.

The M. W. GRAND MASTER had received no intimation of the motion.

The GRAND SECRETARY had received the notice, but it had got mislaid among his papers, and had not been given to the M. W. Grand Master.

W. Bro. WARREN in reference to his motion, spoke of the inconvenience of having strangers not masons to dine at their festivals. It often happened that allusions were made to secrets of the craft at their festivals; and by such means strangers became acquainted with matters which ought to be exclusively known to Masons. He brought forward his motion on constitutional principles; for if singers could obtain admission, why should not other parties not Masons have the same privilege?

W. Bro. DOBIE wished to know whether Bro. Warren intended to exclude ladies.

Bro. WARREN said ladies did not enter the room until after dinner. He had no objection to having the strangers after dinner; but he objected to have them sitting down to dinner with the craft. He had several times called attention to the circumstance; but having failed to get the proper remedy, he had been obliged to appeal to Grand Lodge.

W. Bro. BINCKES seconded the motion, believing that the advantages would more than counterbalance the disadvantages.

The motion was put and carried.

REPORTING PROCEEDINGS.

The W. M. the GRAND MASTER intimated that a reporter other than the accredited reporter of Grand Lodge, had been seen taking notes without previous permission; and on being applied to, he stated that he was taking notes for the *Freemasons' Magazine*. Now as it was against the laws to have unauthorised reports of their proceedings, he should not allow reports to be taken in future.

G. L. was then closed with solemn prayer at eleven o'clock, there being still twenty motions on the paper for discussion.

After G. L. was closed, W. Bro. HAVERS moved a vote of thanks to the W. M., the G. M., for the satisfactory settlement of the Canadian question, which was carried by acclamation.

ROYAL MASONIC INSTITUTION FOR CLOTHING, EDUCATING, AND MAINTAINING THE SONS OF INDIGENT AND DECAYED FREEMASONS.

The Anniversary Festival was held on Wednesday, 11th inst., at Freemason's Tavern, the Right Hon. Viscount Goderich, G. S. W. in the Chair, supported by R. W. Bro. Fleming, P. G. M., Isle of Wight; W. Bro. Jno. Hervey, P. G. S. D.; G. W. K. Potter, P. G. I. D.; R. I. Spiers, P. G. S. B.; A. Le Vean, P. G. S. B.; W. F. White, Dr. Harcourt, W. Farnfield, A. G. Sec., &c., and upwards of 230 Brethren. The Dinner was excellent in quality, and abundant in quantity, reflecting the highest credit on the *cuiseine* of the establishment, the proprietors of which were indefatigable in their efforts to promote the comfort and enjoyment of all. At the conclusion of the banquet grace was exquisitely rendered by the whole of the vocal corps engaged, and then followed the usual loyal and other toasts, to all of which ample justice was done, by both the Noble Chairman in proposing, and by the various Brethren whose names were associated therewith, in responding. We must, however, particularly notice our respected and esteemed Bro. F. Crew, Secretary to the Girls' School, whose name was coupled with the toast of "The Masonic Charities," and whose winning eloquence was never more gracefully exerted than on this occasion. On the children being led round the hall, their appearance was such as to give satisfaction to all present, and all idea of mere "charity" was lost in the feeling that what had been done for them was nothing more than they had a *right* to expect from those who had, perhaps, mixed with their parents and friends in the hours of their prosperity, and whose children had become now their dearest care. Five boys were presented to the Chairman by Bro. Rev. T. E. Cox, G.C., who gave them the prizes for good conduct and proficiency, silver medals being presented to two of them who had particularly distinguished themselves, and whose names we regret not having been able to ascertain. The subscriptions, though falling somewhat short of those of last year, amounted to the noble sum of upwards of £1200, and included £10 10s., from Her Majesty the Queen, Patron of the Institution, and £50 from its constant and untiring supporter, the Earl of Yarborough, D.G.M. The musical arrangements, which were very efficient, were under the direction of that really worthy Mason, Bro. Donald W. King; and comprised the talents of Miss Messent, Mrs. Thomas, and Bros. D. W. King, Lawler, and George George; Bro. B. Danks, Jun., ably discharged the duties of Toastmaster.

We cannot conclude our necessarily brief report without expressing our regret at the absence of those whose rank and position would have lent prestige to the anniversary, our conviction being that our noble Brother in the chair was not supported as he ought to have been on this his first essay as chairman of a Masonic Festival. In saying this, we imply that the greater credit is due to those of the G. O. and Prov. G. O., who gave their attendance.

One fact, too, connected with the arrangements of the Stewards, we cannot pass unnoticed, though we forbear from comment thereon. The price of the tickets was 21s. each; the amount paid to the pro-

priators of the tavern was 20s. each. A question arises. Was it policy to make a profit for the Steward's Fund of 1s. per head? Sure we are many of the Stewards objected to this, and that disapprobation, both "loud and deep," was freely expressed. The "honors" of the Glee-room we did not participate in.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the "Masonic Observer."

Dear Sir and Brother,—How often do we hear it asked "What is Masonry?" This, indeed, is a question much more frequently proposed than answered. And no marvel!—for the Mason to whom it is addressed is sufficiently aware that a damper is put upon his tongue, and a clog upon his pen, by the very circumstance which excites curiosity enough to dictate the enquiry. Every one knows, or supposes himself to know, that the society of Freemasons is an ancient, and, in some cases, a *secret* society; and, therefore, however much a sharp gentleman, or an insinuating lady may consider it a fair trial of skill to entangle a Mason in his talk, he or she would probably withdraw all confidence, and, to a certain extent, their respect for him if either of them were to succeed in extracting the information they appear so desirous of obtaining.

But after all the snares thrown in the way of, perhaps, an unguarded novice, by strong appeals to his good sense, and personal obligations; some more considerate and kind hearted individual, in whom the organ of inquisitiveness is not so very strongly developed, will throw his mantle over his puzzled and half-wavering friend, and thinking to settle him at once from the inquisitorial process to which he is mercilessly subjected, and from the possible consequences of overpressure, exclaims, with a benevolent "Pooh!" "why plague him with attempting to grasp a shadow? Why endeavour to make him do that which is simply impossible, and which, had it been possible, would have been done long enough ago? I am quite sure he would have obliged you if he could—but if he can't, what then? Is it not quite plain that there is *no secret to tell?*"

For thus "meuding the matter," our Mason is doubtless extremely grateful.

From the recollection of having been placed now and then in similar awkward, not to say untenable positions, the old and callous Mason draws the inference that he who undertakes to tell what "Masonry is," assumes no small responsibility, and requires no small amount of fortitude and skill to steer between the Scyllas and Charybdis on which an untaught or faltering hand would be sure to make shipwreck of himself, and his coveted cargo of precious information.

Is then the true character of the *royal Craft* ever to remain under a cloud, which at least furnishes the unthinking world with a plausible excuse for doubting its theoretical stability or its practical worth? Is it condemned to continue in such obscurity as may suggest a doubt to the more thoughtful, whether, if it were really valuable to society at large, we are not bound in conscience to communicate all we know for the benefit of others—upon the sound moral principle that we have no right to monopolize a communicable blessing.

Against any such constraint being necessarily put upon the Craft, which must deprive it of a privilege essential to its vitality, and of the power to assert its high origin and inestimable attributes—there are, no doubt, many among us who would protest most strictly.

The main difficulty is to find the best means of effecting a purpose in the support of which many would concur in opinion, but few, perhaps, would be inclined to act. Should any one of the fraternity feel himself emboldened to try his hand in this knotty work of giving form and substance to that which has been generally deemed incapable of receiving either, and of making public that which has hitherto been supposed to lie concealed under the jewel on a Mason's breast; he ought to be prepared to run the risks which are easily foreseen, but not so easily avoided.

Having fearlessly looked the real difficulties in the face, and they are not a few—he should weigh deliberately the objects and advantages which he may throw into the other scale, in order to strike a just balance between them and the obstacles to be encountered.

If, in the firm belief that such a revelation might be made with the strictest observance of engagements, which a Mason acknowledges in common with other conscientious men; and with profound respect for the peculiar duties to which he has voluntarily subjected himself

as a Mason, he resolutely set about the enterprize—there is no doubt that the honourable and profitable work may be accomplished.

Admit, then, that an individual is to be found among the large number of those who acknowledge the supremacy of the united Grand Lodge of England, and who are perfectly qualified to do honor to the Craft by their knowledge, prudence, and ability—it is still obvious that he ought to possess some particular views and feelings, as regards this delicate and extensive subject, which might not be requisite in any other literary work.

It is hardly necessary to say that he must be sincerely attached to the institution and regard it in a serious light, as a theme which demands the exercise of all his faculties; and with respect to those who do not participate in the knowledge that he has gleaned from the many sources within his reach; he must divest himself entirely of the spirit which breathes in Horace's bitter line, "Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo," and, on the contrary, he must remember that his mission is especially to enlighten and conciliate those who in technical language but not in "the vulgar tongue," are styled the *profane* in contradistinction to the *initiated*. He must be inclined to win the good will even of those who affect to despise what they cannot comprehend by raising the veil of mystery, where admission behind it is allowable; and firmly interposing it only when he is sure that it is impossible to withdraw it consistently with truth and safety. But even in this latter case he should be ready to shew that it would not be common justice to the Craft that matters in which the public have no concern should be indiscriminately divulged.

He knows too well the prejudices which are entertained, more or less, in all grades of Society, against every species of exclusive combination; but he knows also, that the best mode of removing these prejudices is to demonstrate that there is no solid foundation for them; and such as are in themselves groundless and absurd he may justly disregard.

On the other hand, our expositor would have a comparatively easy task; for it is a great, though common error, to speak of Freemasonry as being in every respect a *secret* society. With regard to one great division of our assumed obligations, we have our *published* Book of Constitutions, which regulates the mode of conducting business in and out of Lodge, and many of the practices of the Society in its internal management. To this is prefixed an abridgement of the ancient charges which is well worthy the perusal of any sensible philanthropist. If it can be believed and proved, that there is much in our proceedings which *need not* be secret, then thus much may at any rate be made public in such a manner as to convey whatever benefit might accrue to the possessor of the knowledge, while on those privileges and habits which are essential and peculiar to our craft, the seal of secrecy might remain unbroken, without any injustice to those who are not qualified to receive a communication of them.

We come now to the last and main point to be considered—that, in fact, which has called forth the preceding suggestions. Taking it for granted that there is no inordinate love of *secrecy* pervading the great body of Masons; and admitting that a considerable portion of that which is at present but little known concerning them, is of a nature capable of disclosure to the public without forfeiture of faith on the one side, and with some benefit to the other, or perhaps to both parties, is it prudent and expedient that this disclosure should be made by an irresponsible individual, or by an authorized committee of Grand Lodge?

That this question has, to a certain extent, been mooted in Grand Lodge, when it was moved, "That the Board of General Purposes be desired to draw up a statement of the Principles of the Order," is my excuse for troubling you with these remarks, for it is impossible, I apprehend, that any sincere friend to the Society, wishing to promote its welfare and extend its usefulness, can be otherwise than very anxious at the result of a discussion in which the character and operations of the Fraternity are deeply involved. I am aware that the motion to which I have alluded was negatived at the time; but I cannot help inferring from all that passed on the occasion, that a question of such vital importance will not be allowed to rest without further deliberation on its merits; and that this will be adopted without reference to the immediate subject of complaint, which incidentally produced it on the late occasion. It seems not improbable that the necessity for a more strict investigation, and lucid exposition of our Craft, and its principles, besides these, which are generally recognised as "Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth," may be brought under the consideration of G. L., not as a matter of *defence*, but of *social* duty. In anticipation of such an event, I have taken the liberty, as a *looker-on* of requesting a place in your columns, if they be not better filled with more pressing demands on the attention of your readers.

There is no doubt whatever that the proposal already made for a specific purpose was dictated by a wise and liberal, and therefore

truly Masonic, desire, to relieve the Fraternity, in this and other countries from much undeserved opprobrium; and to render less formidable the opposition of its avowed and somewhat inconsistent enemies, as well as to meet some of the difficulties which its best friends occasionally experience in its defence.

I, for one, most willingly express my belief that the cause of Masonry is much indebted to those Brethren who have raised the question of the general expediency of some such measure; however, G. L. may, in its collective wisdom, see cause to postpone, or to disapprove of any act which must necessarily commit the Society to the responsibility which may attend a publication by an appointed committee of its members.

Having, I fear, trespassed too long upon you, I will conclude for the present by signing myself,

Yours, very fraternally,

P. G. M.

To the Editor of "Masonic Observer and G. L. Chronicle."

Sir and Brother,—It is neither my wish nor intention to stir up the embers of discord, which, happily for all, seem to be fast mouldering away; but I conceive that there is no reason why this feeling should debar me from comment or remark upon facts and circumstances as they arise. I proceed, therefore, to notice two instances of misinterpretation of our laws and constitutions which occurred during the sitting of the last Grand Lodge, viz.: Bro. Dobie's ruling as to the necessity of notice being given at the Board of Masters, of an amendment to a recommendation of the Board of Benevolence, and Bro. Roxburgh's objections to Bro. Rev. G. R. Portal's motion, relative to the alteration of the days of meeting of the former Board, on the ground that it would interfere with the granting of relief to the applicants of the latter Board, in so far as the last meeting of the Quarter was concerned, as that would take place *after* the Board of Masters, to which of necessity the proceedings of the Board of Benevolence have to be referred. With regard to Bro. Dobie's views, it was shown by several speakers that no such notice was required, and that the practice was to omit it, though occasionally such notice had been given; while Bro. Roxburgh's objections were satisfactorily answered by Bros. Binckes and Savage, who proved that they were much of the character of Don Quixote's imaginary opponents, and existed entirely in the W. Bro. Dobie's imagination.

Thus two authorities—one Grand Reg. in *esse*, the other Grand Reg. in *posse*—whose opinions have in past, and may on future, occasions influenced decisions on important matters, clearly manifested their ignorance of these constitutions, to which they so love to appeal for the purpose of stopping discussion on disputed and difficult points.

Commending these facts to the consideration of the Craft,

I am, Sir and Brother, yours fraternally,

TRUE BLUE.

To the Editor of "The Masonic Observer."

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—The various topics affecting the interests and well-being of the Craft, and the questions which from time to time, are brought under discussion in G. L., are so admirably treated in your pages, that it is not without apprehension I venture to intrude upon the notice of your readers. The only reason—I would say, the *justification*—for my doing so is a natural anxiety lest, amid the heartfelt gratitude experienced by all at the results of the last G. L., it should for one moment be forgotten to what instrumentalities such results are mainly to be attributed.

I am not about to review the history of Canada's wrongs—it would be ungenerous *now* to do so. I am not about to detail the efforts that have been made to ensure orders—such a course would be unwise now that relief is promised. On the other hand, it would, I conceive, be a false delicacy to ignore the one or the other. The M. W. G. M. did not hesitate in G. L. to speak of them in the handsomest manner, and in a truly Masonic spirit admitted the former, and acknowledged the latter; and, in my humble judgment, no act of his lordship's Masonic career ever became him better, or reflected more credit upon him, than this. I do not for one moment question the truth of the noble Earl's assertion, that in the decision he had arrived at with regard to the claims of our Canadian Brethren, he had not succumbed to pressure; but I think

I may fairly assume that the G. M. has yielded to conviction. And by whom has this conviction been brought home but by those who have steadily pursued the end they had in view? whose agitation of the question has elicited that "additional information" which his lordship confessed he was not formerly in possession of, and by whose exertions the "Canada Case" has been presented in such a clear, straightforward manner as to contribute (at all events) in no slight degree to the settlement which is so eminently matter for congratulation.

Let it not be thought that I am evincing an ungracious spirit, or that I am in any way imbued with petty, or querulous feeling, or entertain any idea of disappointment that the policy announced with regard to Canada has not been inaugurated by a vote antagonistic to the M. W. G. M. I am confident that I am not giving utterance to my own sentiments merely, but to those of every brother who has assisted in "helping them to right who have suffered wrong," when I state that the present result is just what has been desired, and that it is hailed with unmitigated satisfaction.

If in the opinion of any brother who has witnessed with sorrow and regret the dissensions which of late have undoubtedly existed, it be considered impolitic even to allude to past differences—much more to discuss their cause, extent, and consequences—now that the curtain of reconciliation has been drawn over them, I must state thus much in extenuation. I have the honour to act with a "party,"* which comprises brethren as earnest and conscientious as are to be found in the Craft, who have set themselves the thankless task of doing all that in them lies to effect a reformation of abuses in whatever shape they may exist; and, if possible, to infuse into our much valued institution something of that spirit of progress which is the characteristic of the age in which we live. In the discharge of these self-imposed duties they have been subjected to much obloquy and misrepresentation; and by no one could the words of Israel's Psalmist be taken up with more force and truth than by each of these much-maligned brethren—"They have laid to my charge things that I knew not." Of the erroneous allegations that have been brought against them, does not the decision on the Canadian question afford sufficient refutation? The views they have advocated, the M. W. G. M. has adopted. So far then from their efforts being "directed against the very Fabric of Harmony itself," it is now apparent that they have successfully laboured in cementing one of its Corner Stones, and in securing it more firmly in its place; where it is hoped it may long be retained as one of the chief ornaments and main elements of solidity and endurance in that glorious edifice in which it ought to be the pride and boast of each of us to be "securely built up."

May continued efforts be attended with continued success; and may those who differ from us learn more of that charity which "hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things," and afford practical evidence of the sincerity of their professions by giving us credit for having united for a good purpose, until it shall be proved that we have combined for a bad one.

I am, dear Sir and Brother,
Faithfully and fraternally yours,
FREDK. BINCKES, P.M., No. 11.

London, March 7th, 1857.

* "What is a *party* but a body of men who have a policy which they recommend, and who do not shrink from the responsibility of putting that policy into practice?"

To the Editor of "the Masonic Observer."

Dear Sir and Brother,
I am very glad to see, that in your very useful publication, you inculcate the doctrine, that the business transacted in G. L. more especially concerns Country Masons. We are at present shut out in a great measure, by the lateness of the hour at which the meetings are held, which confines the attendance to those only who live in London.

Now and then it is true, that the representatives of Country Lodges attend, but their attendance must and will be fluctuating as long as the late hour for meeting is adhered to. Why cannot G. L. be got together during the hours at which country people transact their usual business, say at two or three o'clock in the afternoon? I throw out this hint for you to work upon,

And remain,
Dear sir and brother,
Yours fraternally,
A COUNTRY PAST MASTER.

March 17th, 1857.

"L'empire c'est la paix."—NAPOLEON III.

Now may we hope the strife is done,
Now may we hymn a heartfelt praise
For Peace proclaimed from the Dais
And Concord from the throne.

Bear the glad tidings lightly o'er
Atlantic wave, whose billowy breast
Shall waft the peace from east to west,
Love linking shore to shore.

So, where the passionate cry was loud
For all the ill endured so long,
Brothers shall say, "We judged him wrong,
Who deemed him cold and proud.

"It seemed he ruled us at his ease,
All heedless of our suffering state;
Forlorn we seemed and desolate,
Nor hoped for days like these.

"Now welcome be the peace we sought,
And hushed the indignant voice again
Wrung from us in our hour of pain,
And checked the rebel thought.

"And make we answer from the west,
Such Power hath a kindly word,
That grateful as for Right conferred,
We are for Wrong confess."

"Rear you as gently as any sucking dove."

This idea we should late have derided;
Brothers all—east and west, south, and north—
Must have felt as astonished as I did,
At the wonders old time can bring forth.
Happy families—cat, mouse, and owl—now
Hide your heads, you're a regular flam;
In Grand Lodge, we may see cheek by jowl now,
The lion lie down with the lamb.

Each party, by wondrous attraction,
The burden has changed of its songs;
One ceases to lecture on faction,
The other is mute on its wrongs.
And brethren from silvery Isis,
And brethren from seedy old Cam,
May enjoy now the peace that so nice is.
While the lion lies down with the lamb.

'Tis a sound that would glad the immortals,
The sound of that harmony sweet,
Where Roxburghs, and Dobies, and Portals
Are blending the roar with the bleat.
In these days of impure coalescing,
We may hope that this union's no sham,
For Pannure gave his tenderest blessing,
As the lion lay down with the lamb.

"Which is which?" My too curious brother,
I must answer, whichever you please;
Six of one, half a dozen of t' other
Are proportioned the mane and the fleece.
One, with language more pointed than funny,
Said, "For my part I do n't care a d—n,
To see them is worth all the money,"
The lion lie down with the lamb."

Then success to the Holy Alliance!
Henceforth we are all hand in glove;
And the lips, that once breathed but defiance,
Are attuned to the murmurs of love.
Come up from all parts of the nation,
Country brethren, our meetings to cram;
And see for your edification,
The lion lie down with the lamb.

[From the *Masonic Journal*, Brunswick, Maine.]

According to Section 2 of Art. III. of the Constitution of our Grand Lodge, if a candidate is rejected in any Lodge, he cannot be initiated in any other Lodge "without the recommendation of six members of said Lodge to which he first applied, of whom the Master and Wardens shall be three." And when the Master and Wardens are unwilling so to recommend a candidate who has been rejected, it shall be their duty to communicate such rejection to the Grand Lodge or to the District Deputy.

A GOOD SIGN.—The Grand Secretary of Texas reports *two hundred and eighty-six* rejections for initiation in the year 1855. While we are so hard pressed by those wishing to "take the degrees," we look upon the above as a favorable sign. It shows caution, a virtue which is much needed just now.

The man who couldn't "trust his feelings," is supposed to do business strictly on the cash principle.

PROVINCIAL MESS.—Our readers are aware that an arrangement has been made for the convenience of Provincial Brethren attending Grand Lodges, whereby they may dine together at a very moderate cost. The first meeting took place on the 4th inst., when the following Brethren were present:—Brs. Hearn, No. 204; P. D. P. G. M. Isle of Wight; Holden, No. 252; Madigan, ditto; Mc'Queen, No. 338; D. P. G. M., Super; Smithers, No. 338; Verrall, ditto; P. G. S. Sussex; Stuckey, ditto; P. P. G. S. B., Sussex; Bacon, No. 394; Portal, No. 460; P. P. S. G. W., Oxford; Matthews, No. 862; P. G. T., Gloucestershire. The dinner and wines gave great satisfaction.

WESTMINSTER AND KEYSTONE LOPGE, NO. 10.—There are few, if any, instances of such complete success attending the revival of a Lodge, as in the case of the above. The original warrant bears the date of 1721, and the numbers having fallen off to a great extent, it was revived by some brethren of the Province of Oxford, in the early part of 1855; since which time it has been joined by above 70 brethren, including amongst others the P. G. M. for Oxford; the P. G. M. for the Isle of Wight; the P. P. G. M. for Bengal; the Earl of Carnarvon, the Earl of Lincoln, the Earl Cowper, Viscount Vaughan, Viscount Valletort, Viscount Howard, Lord North, Lord Skelmersdale, the Hon. W. W. Vernon, the Hon. W. H. North, the Lord Holmesdale, Sir G. Beaumont, bart., Sir John Harington, bart. The active interest in all matters that concern the welfare of the Order, evinced by the members of this distinguished Lodge, both in London and the Provinces is well known. The installation of the Earl of Carnarvon as W. M. will take place towards the end of May. The attendance of visitors is likely, we understand, to be very numerous; and the Freemason's hall has been secured for the banquet. The invitations will, we believe, include a large number of grand officers, and the M. W. the G. M. as well as Lord Panmure have signified their intention of being present on the occasion.

ATTENDANCE OF GRAND OFFICERS.—There have been Six Grand Lodges held during the past (Masonic) year. Of which the M. W. the G. M. has attended five; the D. G. M., none; the S. G. W., two; the J. G. W., four.

ERRATUM.—We are requested to amend our report of the proceedings of the Special Grand Lodge of 11th February, under the head of "Intolerance of the Roman Catholic Priesthood," by the substitution of the following, in lieu of the paragraph in Bro. Binkes' remarks, now standing at lines 5, 6, and 7, from the bottom p. 6:

"Had our suffering brethren been labouring under disabilities imposed by Jew or Mahometan, he should have counselled a similar course of action to that now proposed. The Roman Catholic Church," &c., &c.

PROVINCIAL MESS.

In order to facilitate the attendance of Provincial Brethren at the Quarterly Communications in London, the following arrangement has been made:—

1. Any Provincial Mason, on payment of £1 annually, will be entitled to attend the Provincial Mess, at F. M. Tavern, on the day of each Quarterly Communication, when he will be provided with a plain dinner and a pint of wine.
2. All Country Lodges will be at liberty to subscribe at the same rate for any number of their members.
3. Provincial Masons who are not subscribers may attend the mess on payment of 7s. 6d.
4. Brethren, attending in right of Lodge subscriptions, must bring a note from the W. M. of their Lodge, to authorise them in so doing.
5. Notice must be sent to *The Landlord, Freemason's Tavern, Great Queen Street, London*, by every Brother intending to dine at the mess, two days before each Quarterly Communication.
6. The chair will be taken at 5 p. m., by the Treasurer or some Brother deputed by him.
7. Subscriptions must be paid in advance before the first Quarterly Communication in each year to the Treasurer, the Rev. Geo. Raymond Portal, P. Prov. S. G. W. Oxon, 3, Wilton Crescent, London, by post-office order on the Knightsbridge Office.

NOTICE.

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An extra number is published after a G. L. of emergency.

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ADVERTISEMENTS may be sent to Mr. Peach, Bridge Street, Bath, or to Mr. J. Clements, Little Pulteney Street, London, by the 15th of March, June, September, and December, and not later than one week after each G. L. of emergency.

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